

Catering to 3000 Different Appetites!

Feeding the "Permanent Guests" at the Bronx Zoo Is a Job Which Keeps Chef Rudolph H. Bell on the Jump, for They Roar When the Service Is Slow, Growl Over the Food When They Get It, and Some of Them Eat So Much That Their Portions Must Be Measured by the Ton



"Prince" is interrupted from his 12 pounds of beef by the flash of the camera.

By Fay Stevenson.

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ATS! When do we eat?"

That is the roar which comes from the lion's den.

That is the grunt which comes from the bears.

That is the wall from the hippopotamus as he comes out of his tank and waddles out in the yard.

That is the squeak which issues from the monkey cages as tiny little creatures swing from their perches and peer out for their keeper to bring their much desired dinner.

In fact, just at 2 every day at the Bronx Park Zoo there is a cry for food heard from all parts of the Zoo, and whether it is a grunt, a howl or a whistle, it is the question all the animals, birds and reptiles want answered.

And just at this hour the great feast begins. The one meal that is carefully prepared by the chef is served.

The Waldorf may boast of its Oscar, but the Zoo boasts of Rudolph H. Bell, the chef who concocts all the special dishes for over three thousand animals and caters to every individual one of their whims. And Mr. Bell declares that the animals are just as hard to please and have just as many fits and tantrums over their food as the most fastidious old bachelor or particular spinster.

Old Prince, the fourteen-year-old lion, is very apt to take a dislike to his twelve pounds of beef; Buster, the 300-year-old tortoise, has to be tempted by watermelon, and frequently the monkeys balk at their cooked rice unless it has raisins well distributed in its glossy, white surface.

But Mr. Bell has been the chef at the Zoo for over twenty-three years, and John J. Tuomey has been the head keeper for the same length of time, so when an especially tempting dish is desired by any of the animals, these two men put their heads together and talk over tempting but healthful menus.

The kitchen at the Zoo is fitted up just like a kitchen in a modern apartment with a butcher's shop added. There is the snow white sink, a gas range and there are the rows and rows of shiny kettles and stew pans with a large double boiler for rice. But instead of the usual deal table with its clean, white oilcloth one finds three big tables just like the ones in the butcher shop, and an assortment of knives, choppers and saws.

Two huge refrigerators, one for vegetables and fruits, the other for meat, are just across from the kitchen, while outside the door a number of small pushcarts are lined up ready to take the food directly to the cages of the animals. Each keeper is supposed to come after the food for his particular charges, and if one announces that "Peter Murphy," the hippopotamus, has a tremendous appetite, the chef gives him an extra supply of cabbage. Another keeper remarks that "Bridget," the trick monkey, is out of humor, the chef adds an extra spoonful of raisins to her rice or fixes a tempting banana for her.

"The reptiles are fed at night, because that is their natural time to prey," said Mr. Bell. "We give them rabbits, mice, guinea pigs and chickens, so they require little attention from the main kitchen. Many of the birds are fed in the morning, but the

animals, especially the large ones, are fed at 2 in the afternoon or a little after. Since these animals are fed but once a day, this means a big event to them. We try to vary their menus as much as their habits will permit, but during this time of year you never can tell."

However, when I visited the different cages just at the moment food was dispensed, I noted that, hot weather or not, most of these creatures devoured their food with vim and heartiness—so Mr. Bell must be a pretty good cook.

Dinner was served with little ceremony in the lion house, and when a twelve-pound piece of beef was thrust through the bars to Prince, the dignified and stately lion, he immediately pounced upon it and started from his cage out into his run. But it was right here that Prince turned a gleaming eye upon the crowd of children and their escorts. The door to his run was closed! The Evening World's photographer desired to take a picture of Prince dining in his cage and had requested that his programme be altered.

But Prince did not see it that way. He wanted to dine alone; besides, he spied the camera and knew this meant trouble. Then a sudden flash, a loud explosion and bang! Prince's face was registered. But anger, hatred and fear came into the picture, while a growl and then a hiss issued from this huge old fellow.

In the next cage "Helen," the two-year-old flapper lioness, panted and walked from one side of her cage to the other. The keeper threw her a ten-pound piece of beef, but she was too frightened to eat. She looked from "Prince" to "Menelek," known as the "prettiest lion," and refused to eat even after those stalwart old boys settled down to dine.

But the monkeys welcomed the camera and were even so interested that they forgot to eat at times. Their diet for that day consisted of bananas and carrots and it was noticed that many of these little creatures seemed to enjoy the visit of their keeper quite as much as their food.

"Bridget," whose face rather fits



Sea lions are delighted when they have butterfish for dinner



"Platypus," the missing link between bird and animal, lays eggs but suckles its young.



"Helen," the two-year-old "flapper" of the Zoo, prefers 10 pounds of beef to ice cream pie.



Rudolph H. Bell
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"Peter Murphy" eats a cabbage as easily as we do a cherry, not believing it worth while to make "two bites of a cabbage."

of old age, and since the war none have been received.

"Peter Murphy," the hippopotamus, spends most of his time in the tank, but at the dinner hour he waddles out to his run and opens his mouth just as wide as it will go. All the keeper has to do is to throw in a cabbage, which he eats as easily as we might a cherry, not believing it worth while to make "two bites of a cabbage."

After Peter has eaten about six heads of cabbage he dines upon eighteen leaves of bread, eight or nine bunches of carrots and three dozen bananas.

"Alice," the Indian elephant, is twelve years old and rather inclined to moods. She eats from fifteen to twenty leaves of bread, all sorts of green vegetables and two bales of hay a day.

"Cartoon," the African elephant, is the friend of all the children who visit the park. He not only gives them rides upon his back but amuses them by performing his tricks of telephoning, ringing a bell and walking upon his hind legs.

But how much food do these 3,252 creatures consume daily? There are 623 mammals, 2,174 birds and 465 reptiles and amphibians. What does it cost to feed them each day?

It was Dr. W. Reid Blair who answered these questions. Although Dr. Blair does not handle the food he puts his veto or O. K. upon the amount of food his charges may eat in order to keep them upon the well list.

And here is the amount of food consumed daily under prescribed orders:

175 loaves of bread.
250 pounds of beef.
15 heads of cabbage.
36 bunches of carrots.
2 barrels of potatoes.
450 bananas.
150 apples.
4 dozen oranges.
15 pounds boiled rice.
25 quarts of milk.
500 pounds of hay.

Watermelons, extra seasonal vegetables, malted milk, zwieback and bird seed will have to come in as "extras," but the above list gives one an idea of the "costs" at the Zoo.

And the cost?

Well, last year Dr. Blair said that the food for the animals amounted to \$41,708.91, so you may divide that by 365, and find out.

Meanwhile the animals should worry. Their chief concern is what Chef Bell has for them and how long it will be until 2 o'clock, when the dinner procession starts.

"Buster," the 300-year-old tortoise, enjoying his dinner of watermelon.

her name, was put through a number of tricks before her dinner was served. She will pray, pose as an actress and "look mad." But Timothy, the baby chimpanzee, who is but two months old, probably gets the most attention. Timothy feeds

upon malted milk and the choicest baby foods and carries his sweater about with him.

There is "Dempsey" and a "Babe Ruth" among the baboons, but it was Jake who suddenly took a dislike to the cameraman and shook his long arm out the cage in warning that he simply wasn't going to have his picture taken. When the flash exploded Jake picked up all the carrots upon which he was about to dine and pelted the photographer well, hitting him in the neck and shoulders with a sure aim.

At three sharp the sea lions dined upon butter fish. Many of them found it was too much of an effort to dive for them in the water and came ashore to eat from the keeper's pail.

Three-thirty is the scheduled time for the bears to eat, and because they hear all the commotion going on in other houses and cages they are ready with their paws outstretched or standing erect humbly begging for their bread. Each bear dines upon twenty large sized loaves of bread. Twice a week they receive five

pounds of beef or three pounds of fish. And although there is a rule against feeding the animals, the keeper smiled as he admitted the bears occasionally shared an ice cream cone or a lolly-pop with the kiddies.

Buster, the 300-year-old tortoise, is pretty slow about coming to meals. It takes him quite a few minutes to crawl from the further end of his run to the keeper, even when he sees he is to have watermelon for dinner. But he is not so slow when it comes to eating, and by the way he devoured a huge melon it rather looked as if he might win in a watermelon contest.

The crowds have turned their attention from Buster, however, to the Platypus, the new pet at the Zoo, which has just been purchased for \$1,400 and is considered the missing link between bird and animal. This strange little animal is about the size of a muskrat and has the peculiar faculty of laying eggs and suckling its young. It has a flat bill, no teeth and webbed feet and lives in rivers but sleeps in burrows in the banks. It feeds upon angle worms, grubs and small shrimp.

Just at present the Zoo boasts of no tigers. Most of the old fellows died